

Twice-yearly TSP 'Open Season' sessions end July 1

Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Defense Department civilians and servicemembers building tax-free retirement accounts through the Thrift Savings Plan soon will be able to change their investment options at any time instead of just twice a year. Current biannual TSP "open season" investment-choice windows will end July 1, said Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, execu-

tive director of the Armed Forces Tax Council. TSP participants, she noted, will be able to switch their retirement account options at any time. "There's not going to be the two 'open seasons' during the year," Fenton explained, where people can sign up for the retirement savings/investment program, change their contribution levels, or change investment options. Military people and civilians covered by the Civil Service Retirement System

can contribute up to 10 percent of their paycheck to establish tax-free retirement accounts that grow from accumulated savings and investments in bonds, stocks and international funds. Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System can contribute up to 15 percent in 2005. From 2006 on, no limit will apply to any military, CSRS or FERS participants in TSP. Another TSP change also slated to start

July 1 gives participants the choice of having a financial manager automatically adjust how funds are invested as market conditions change. "They'll move you from equities to bonds when you need to," Fenton explained, noting such a practice should assist participants in maximizing their TSP contributions. Servicemembers have been eligible to establish tax-free TSP retirement accounts since January 2002, Fenton said.

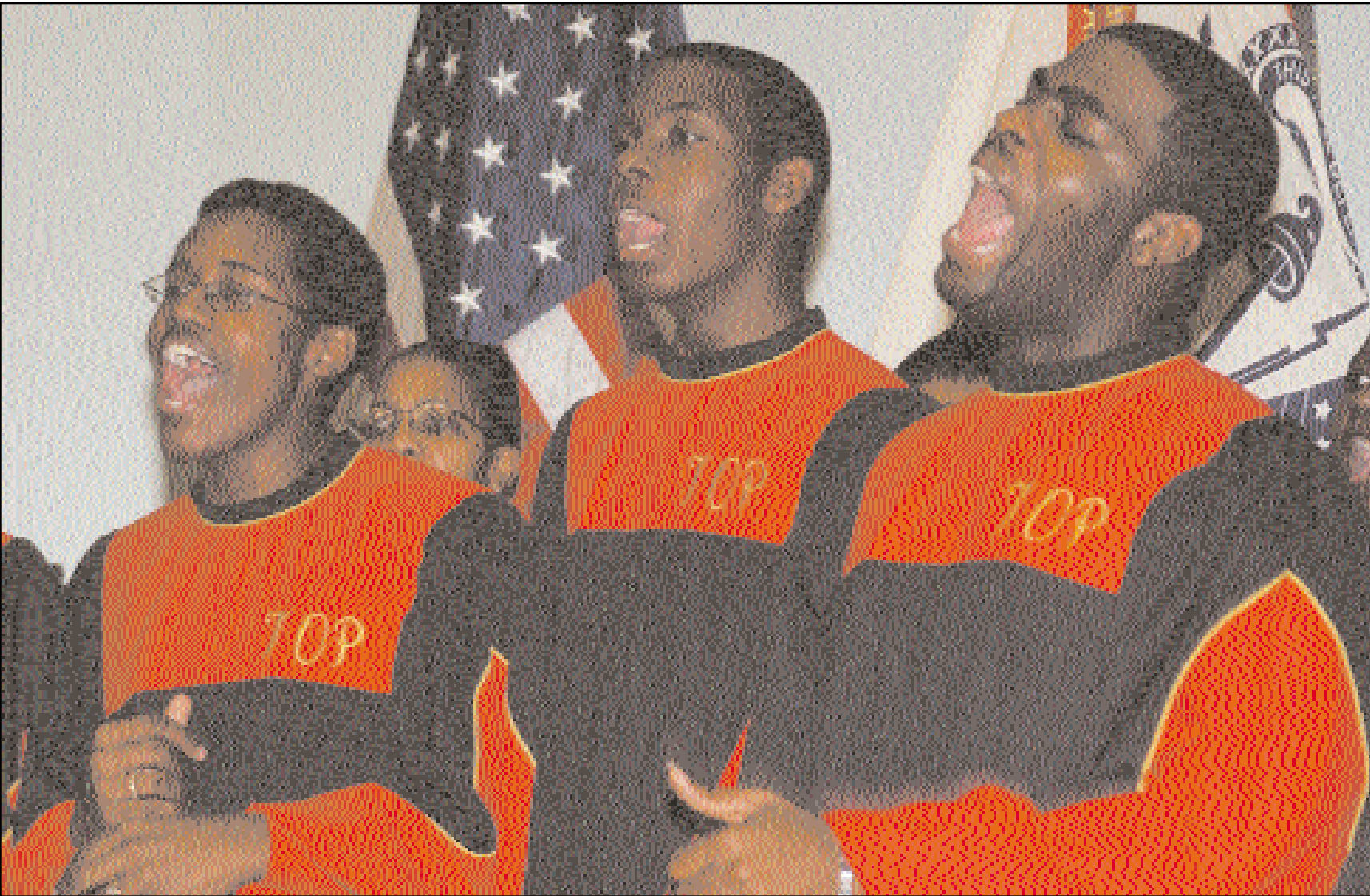
Establishing TSP accounts is a good idea even for those military members who don't serve long enough to qualify for a pension, Fenton pointed out. TSP funds accumulated during military service, she added, can be transferred to participating federal agency TSPs if a departing service member takes a government civilian job. TSP savings can also be rolled into non-government civilian employers' IRA retirement accounts, Fenton said.

Paper please...
Commissary encourages use of single paper bags

Bonnie Powell
DECA

FORT LEE, Va. — Shopping in the commissary can save military families 30 percent or more. Now, customers can help commissaries in the United States hold the line on supply costs by asking customers to "just say no" to double bagging and say "paper please" when they get to the register. With more than 92 million customer transactions per year, grocery bags cost commissaries nearly \$20 million annually. The cost of plastic bags has risen more than 30 percent in the last two years due to the rise in oil prices, which directly affects the cost of manufacturing plastic bags. "Every extra dollar we spend on bags is a dollar we may not have for payroll or other commissary services," said Patrick B. Nixon, acting director and chief executive officer. "Customers can help DeCA control costs by switching to paper bags and eliminating double bagging."

Baggers, who are not employees of DeCA, will be given fact sheets informing them of the costs of double bagging and plastic to encourage them to participate in the effort to hold the line on rising costs. Statistics show that commissaries currently use 80 percent plastic to 20 percent paper. DeCA officials want to see those percentages reversed. "Several years ago the plastic was less expensive so we encouraged going with plastic bags," said Nixon. "Now paper is the more economical choice." Customers who want plastic or double bags will be accommodated, but "we hope customers are interested in helping their commissary hold down costs," said Scott Simpson, chief operating officer for the Defense Commissary Agency. "We hope when they get to the register they'll say 'no' to double bagging and 'yes, paper please' to their bagger." The awareness campaign to encourage customers to switch to paper bags is only taking place in U.S. commissaries because the cost of shipping the much bulkier paper bags to Europe and the Far East outweighs any savings obtained by switching to paper. The campaign to reduce double bagging is worldwide. The Defense Commissary Agency operates a world-wide chain of nearly 275 commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices - savings worth more than \$2,700 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for the military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best men and women to serve their country.



(left to right) Ondre Owens, Ronald Parker and Shannon LeCounte get into the music during the Black History Month observance at the Army Education Center Feb. 17. The Temple of Praise choir performed gospel selections.

Black History Month program rocks the house

Spc. Robert Adams
Frontline Staff writer

Fort Stewart's annual Black History Month recognition program was held at the Army Education Center Feb. 17. The program featured guest speaker Judge Linnie L. Darden III, who spoke to Soldiers, community leaders and members of the community about this year's Department of the Army theme, "The Niagara Movement." The program also featured the Midway Middle School step team, which performed traditional choreography called stepping. After the step performance, members of the Temple of Praise, Total Praise Choir took the stage and performed a few gospel selections. During the choir's songs, many who attended stood and clapped with the music. To conclude the singing, there was a musical solo by Sgt. Joi Friend, Headquarters and Headquarters Support, 1st Battalion, 39th Field Artillery. "At these observances we are learning about other cultures and it helps build our esprit as a division so that we know that we are one fight, one team," said Lt. Col. Timothy Thomas, division equal opportunity program manager. "Learning about each other's similarities and



Members of the Midway Middle School team perform a stepping routine for the audience during the Black History Month observance program Feb. 17.

cultures can only foster better working environments and professional relationships." Judge Darden then gave an inspirational speech. He talked about the individuals who had an impact on the more than 10 million African Americans of their generation. A generation where freedoms and equality was not a reality. He said that these daring and courageous souls of

"The Niagara Movement" shaped a better America. Not only did he talk about the African American history and the fight for freedom, but he also said that there is a link between The Niagara Movement and the freedom movements in Iraq and Afghanistan. "We are very thankful for the participation of all the Soldiers and agencies that come and support the event," Thomas said. "We are all in this together."

Gen. Schoomaker rounds up Soldiers

By Master Sgt. C.S. Allbright
Army News Service

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — On his first trip to the annual Stock Show and Rodeo Feb. 16, a young San Antonio native found himself in the center of the arena for a life-changing event.



New recruits march out to the center of the arena Feb. 16 in San Antonio to take the oath of enlistment during the Stock Show and Rodeo Feb. 16.

Several thousand people watched as Jason Taylor and 46 other young men and women took the Army's oath of enlistment administered by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, mounted on horseback alongside country music's George Strait, also on horseback. "It's an honor to be enlisted by such a high figure in the Army," said Taylor, who is scheduled to depart for basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., later this week. The San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo is a 17-day event that draws in more than 1.1 million visitors to agriculture, livestock, rodeo, and entertainment events. "Army Appreciation Day" was a special theme day coordinated with stock show officials, the Fifth Recruiting Brigade and Lt. Gen. Robert T. Clark, the commanding general, Fifth U.S. Army were the Army's local hosts of the delegation. During Gen. Schoomaker's visit, he and Strait could be seen walking around the rodeo grounds and talking to recruiters at the Army display area. While on the grounds, Gen. Schoomaker and Strait practiced their lassoing skills on a mechanical head/heel team calf roping device. Gen. Schoomaker and Strait also attended a reception for the future



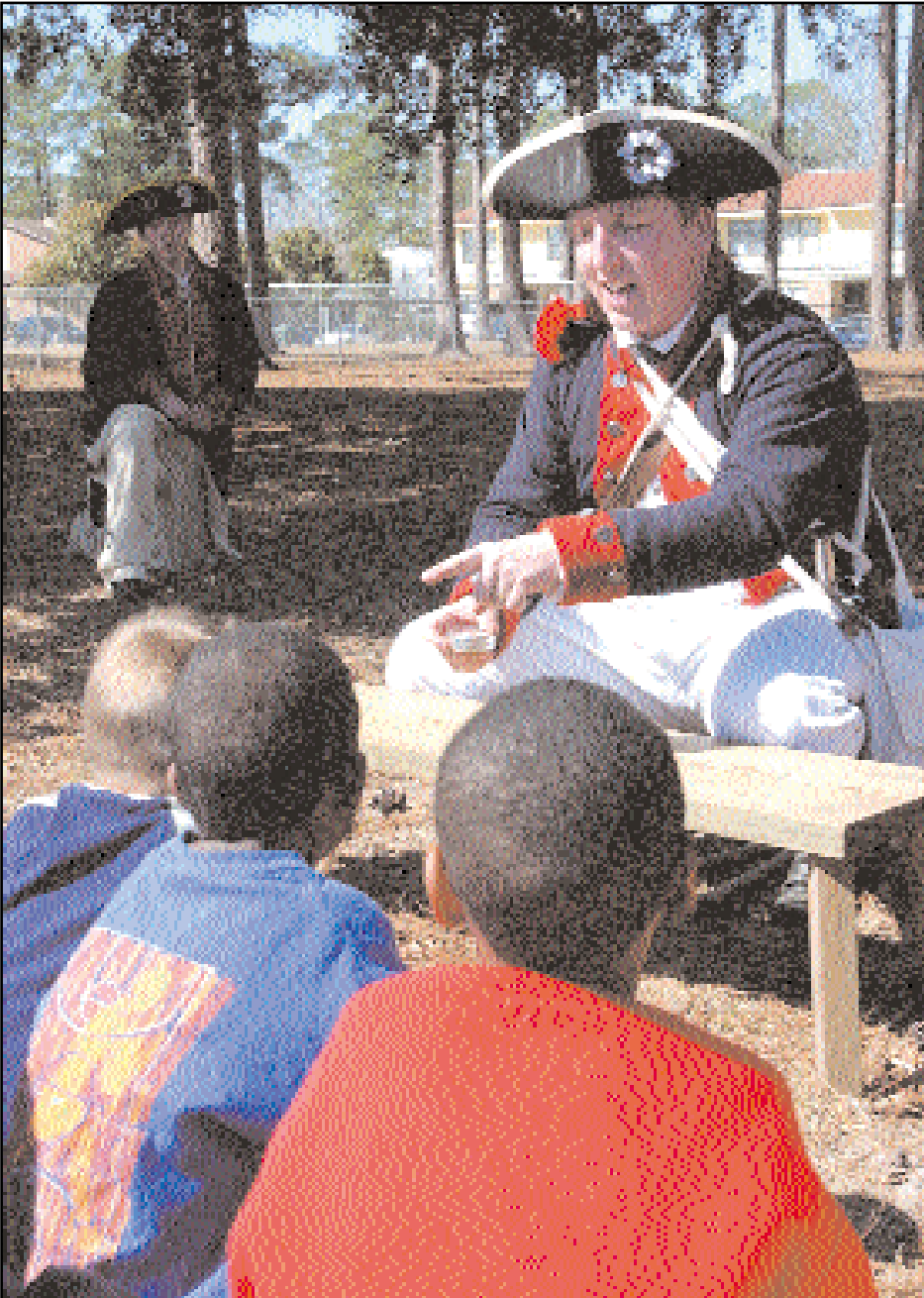
Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, U.S. Army chief of staff, prepares his horse for a ride around the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo arena Feb. 16.



Jamie Keena, musician, plays an early colonial instrument during Diamond Elementary School's Colonial Day festivities Feb. 17. Keena also showed children a variety of other instruments as well.



Gary Cantrell, media specialist, Diamond Elementary, makes a pair of moccasins. Colonial Day offered students an opportunity to learn about a different era of America. Demonstrations allowed the children a interesting way to learn American history.



Chad Carpenter, colonial reenactor, demonstrates to Diamond Elementary students how to start a fire with flint and a stick.

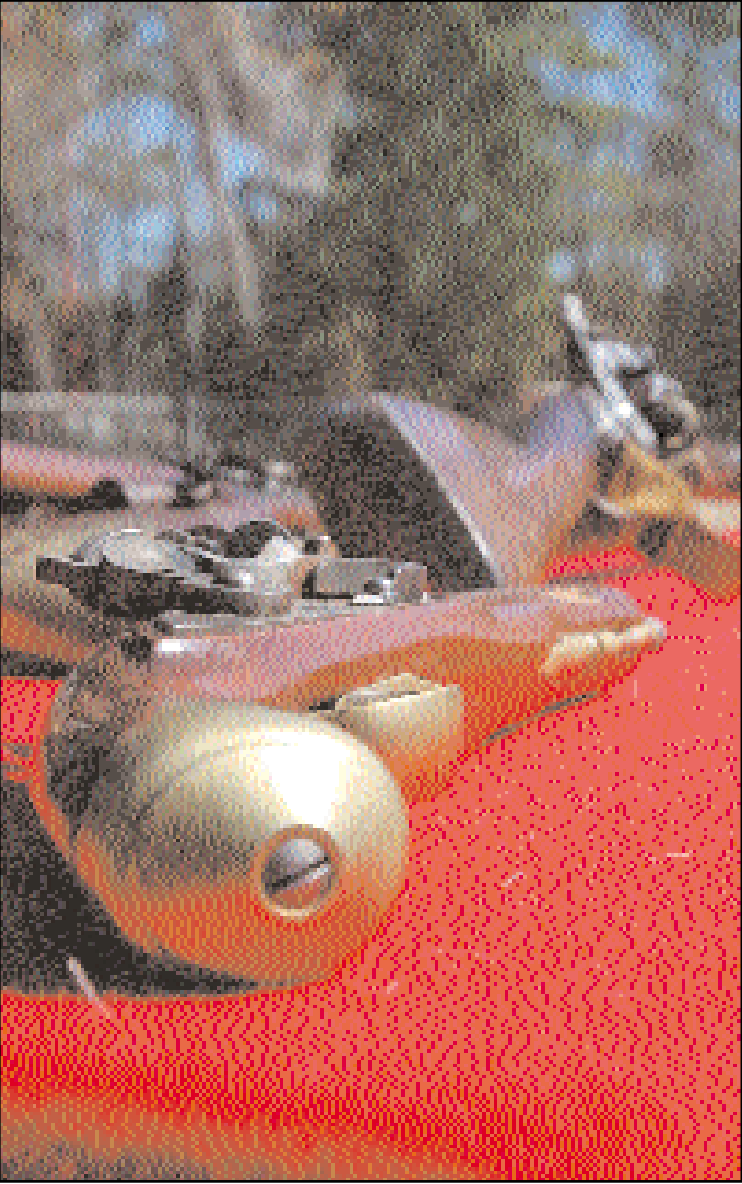
Blast from past

Students get a vision of the colonial era

Colonial actors show how life was different in America during the colonial time period of history to Diamond Elementary students.



Teachers and students gather around one of the many booths set up on the Diamond Elementary School field.



A colonial era pistol is displayed along with other weapons of that time for people to view.



Scott Hodges, colonial doctor, talks to children about the life of a doctor during this era of the United States.

CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

Got contentment?

Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Levine
1-39 FA

Is real contentment possible to attain or is it a goal for which we strive a lifetime and can never ultimately achieve? Those who rely on God by faith can have real contentment, just as the apostle Paul enjoyed. He wrote, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am... I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:11-13) Paul was “deployed” by God all over the Mediterranean, suffered greatly numerous times, and yet he had learned the secret of contentment. Oh that we could each say that!

In our fast food, instant gratification, if-it-feels-good-do-it culture, we demand contentment now! But God has created us such we cannot simply take a pill and become instantly content. It will never come through shopping or having enough money or comfort. Even if all the worries and suffering were taken out of my life, I would still not be content. But whether you are deploying to Iraq or “manning the fort” at home, you can be content. How? According to the Bible, it is not through the “power of positive thinking,” nor by becoming stoical or cynical about the hardships of Army deployment.

The Bible tells us how to get contentment, regardless of our circumstances. It comes first of

all through believing that Jesus Christ’s death is sufficient for you and your sins.

The Bible itself argues like this: If God takes care of your greatest problem—your sins—then He will be your refuge, strength, and help in whatever circumstances you find yourself, and He’ll provide whatever else you need. (Ps. 46:1-2; Rom. 8:32).

That’s what the apostle Paul found; that’s what millions of Christians through the centuries have found, and you can too. Genuine, real contentment is a gift of God which He is pleased to give to those who will—in faith—respond to God each day; obeying His Word, the Bible, where He reveals Himself and His will to us. Jesus said that if we continually learn from Him as His disciples, then we “will find rest for your souls” and His truth will “make you free.” (Mt. 11:29; Jn. 8:32)

Contentment will always be elusive to the person who looks to his environment and circumstances to provide his/her satisfaction.

Real contentment which comes from God is cultivated through finding your sufficiency in Jesus Christ, Who Himself is all-sufficient and can therefore help you.

Contentment is the fruit of learning to center your life by faith on Jesus Christ and His provision. (Phil 2:5-11)



Dorothy Harrell, wife of deployed Sgt. First Class Marc Harrell, 3-7 Infantry, picks up her day-of-relaxation basket she won during the Fort Stewart’s Officers’ Spouses’ Club silent auction held at Club Stewart. For story and photos, see the March 3 issue of the Frontline.

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Rodeo ————— from Page 1B

Soldiers who were to be sworn in as part of the opening ceremonies of the nightly rodeo. Also at the reception were members of the Army-sponsored rodeo team, including Luke Banguinho, a world-class champion steer wrestler.

Schoomaker told the future Soldiers that he and the nation were very proud of them.

“This is something that will help you and help the nation. You’ll be a better citizen as a result of this, because you understand how absolutely blessed we are in this country for the things we have and not take them for granted,” Schoomaker said.

Future Soldier Stacy Owens didn’t seem impressed by the bright lights and big names. Her father was a career Soldier, and was planning to enlist anyway to become a radiological technologist.

“It’s no big deal,” Owens said. However, she and the others were able to get Strait’s autograph as the singer signed and posed for pictures for a long line of fans.

After the reception, recruiters from the local stations marched the future Soldiers onto the dirt of the SBC

Center were Schoomaker and Strait waited on horseback to perform the swearing in.

After the ceremony, the future Soldiers marched back through the chutes to begin their careers in the Army.

The future Soldiers are part of the delayed-entry program, with some leaving as early as this month, while others are headed out for basic training in the summer months.

Schoomaker and Strait also spent some time during the rodeo events with a contingency of wounded Soldiers attending as guests of the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo.

The wounded troops are recuperating at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston.

Strait served in the Army 1971-75 and played in an Army-sponsored band, “Rambling Country,” while he was stationed in Hawaii. Strait has been described as “a great friend of the military.”

The San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo is a non-profit organization that promotes education and development of agriculture careers and issues.

Each year, it also features the various armed services in San Antonio..



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker administers the oath of enlistment to new recruits at a rodeo in San Antonio Feb. 16, accompanied by country-music star George Strait.

Worship Opportunities		
Fort Stewart		
Catholic	Location	Time
Sunday Mass	Heritage	9 a.m.
Saturday Mass	Heritage	5 p.m.
Weekday Mass	Victory	11:45 a.m.
Protestant		
Sunday Protestant Worship	Marne	11 a.m.
Sunday Gospel Service	Victory	11 a.m.
Sunday Family Friendly	Vale	11 a.m.
Tuesday Healing Service	WACH	11:30 a.m.
Sunday School	Diamond Elementary	9:30 a.m.
Kids' Church(K to 6th grade)	Across from Dia. Elem.	11:00 a.m.
American Samoan		
Sunday Worship	Vale	1 p.m.
Muslim		
Friday Jum'ah	Building 610	12:30 p.m.
Masjid (Daily)	Building 610	9 a.m.
Lutheran		
Sunday Worship	Marne	9 a.m.
Hunter Army Airfield		
Protestant		
Protestant Sunday School	Religious Education Center	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Service	Chapel	11 a.m.
Catholic		
Sunday Mass	Chapel	9:30 a.m.
CCD	Religious Education Center	11 a.m.

Judge Darden speaks of freedom

Spc. Robert Adams
Frontline Staff

Judge Linnie L. Darden III was the guest speaker for the Black History Month observance held Feb. 17 at the Ft. Stewart Army Education Center.

Darden has been a gospel minister and criminal lawyer for the past twenty-three years.

Darden has served in the Army since he was commissioned July 29, 1977.

He has ties to Fort Stewart where he served with the United States Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps as prosecuting attorney for the 24th Infantry Division.

Currently he is a colonel in the United States in which he has served in the United States Army for more than 27 years.

Prior to working for the U.S. Army JAG Corps, Darden worked as a Deputy District Attorney for the Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office.

He went on to practice with the firm of Jones, Osteen and Jones in Hinesville, Ga.

His accomplishments include being the lead counsel in four death penalty cases in which the defendants were charged with a total of twelve counts of murder.

He has also tried two multi-defendant federal drug conspiracy trials to jury verdict.

As a Liberty County public defender, he has handled thousands of criminal felony matters including fourteen jury trials to verdict.

Judge Darden is currently the Juvenile Court Judge for the Atlantic Judicial District of Georgia. He is also a member of the U.S. Army Trial Judiciary holding the rank of Colonel.



Spc. Robert Adams

Judge Linnie L. Darden, III speaks to attendees about the struggles for freedom not only for African Americans in the past but around the world today at the Black History Month program at the Army Education Center Feb. 17.

Judge Darden graduated from the University of California and Boalt Hall School of Law.

Not only has Darden been a criminal lawyer for most of his career, but he also has been the Senior Minister of the Fiftieth Street Church of Christ in Savannah, Ga., for the past 13 years.

He currently resides in Hinesville, Ga., with his wife of 19 years, Bert Roland Darden. They have two children, Linnie, IV, age 17, and Trevor, age 15.

Army team takes 13th spot in the Daytona 500

Story and Photos by
Maj. William Thurmond
Army News Service

DAYTONA, Fla. — Joe Nemechek drove the Army's 01 Chevrolet to a 13th place finish in Sunday's Daytona 500.

The 47th running of "America's Race" was a wild one, with 11 cautions, 22 lead changes and an over-time "green-white-checker" finish at lap 203 that enabled Jeff Gordon to collect his third Daytona 500 victory and his 70th NEXTEL Cup career win.

Following Gordon in the second spot was Kurt Busch, the reigning NEXTEL Cup champion. Rounding out the top five was Dale Earnhardt Jr. in third, followed by Nemechek's teammate Scott Riggs in fourth. Jimmie Johnson came in fifth.

The Army's entry started the race in the 34th position and struggled in the early part of the race.

"We never had the rhythm today," said Nemechek. "We had a couple of great runs and then I messed up by sliding through the pit box twice."

The first time that happened NASCAR assessed a one-lap penalty that dropped Nemechek a lap down. A fortunate caution a few laps later enabled Nemechek to get a "luck dog" pass and get back on the lead lap with the rest of the field.

Clever pit strategy and several strong pit stops kept "Front Row Joe" in position to move to the front of the pack. An especially quick stop at lap 65 enabled the

Army car to gain 14 positions. And a 14-second green flag stop at lap 138 moved him forward several more spots and into the lead for two laps.

But for much of the day, Nemechek remained stuck in the middle of the 43-car field.

"We were all over the map," said Nemechek. "It seemed that we were always battling back from the rear of the field."

Throughout the afternoon, crew chief Ryan Pemberton issued clear instructions to his team, telling them to stay focused and shake off their problems. A decision to take four tires at lap 184 proved potentially decisive, giving only Nemechek and Rusty Wallace fresh rubber among the top 15 contenders.

For a while, it looked like Nemechek would use that advantage and work his way to the front. But it was not to be.

"There at the end, I thought I was going to salvage this race with a top ten or even a top five finish, but I couldn't pick the right lane and got passed by too many cars," said Nemechek.

"I really feel I let my U.S. Army team down by messing up in the pits," said Nemechek. "But considering how erratic we were today a 13th place finish is okay, and I just mean okay."

We're a much better super-speedway team than we showed today."

Next weekend the Army Racing team moves on to California Speedway for the Auto Club 500.



The Army pit crew changes the tires and fuels the 01 Chevrolet, driven by Joe Nemechek during Sunday's Daytona 500. Nemechek drove to a 13th place finish, and the winner Jeff Gordon won his third Daytona 500.

Race team acknowledges troops' sacrifice

Story and Photos by
Maj. William Thurmond
Army News Service

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — If you have ever watched a NASCAR race, either in person or on TV, you could not help but notice the impact modern corporate marketing has had on the nation's fastest-growing spectator sport.

For example, the field for Saturday's Hershey's Take 5 300 at Daytona Raceway contained 43 racecars, each colorfully adorned with the logos of their many sponsors.

The paint schemes on these NASCAR Busch Series racers featured household names like McDonalds and Fruit of the Loom.

Others sported the names of relatively obscure products, such as "Boudreaux's Butt Paste" (a baby product, in case you were wondering whether to keep reading or notify the authorities).

But one of the cars did not glorify commerce. It asked for fans' support, but this product is not available in stores.

It simply asked for you to pray for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen and Marines.

The number 72 'Pray 4 Our Troops' (P4OT) Chevrolet was driven by veteran driver Donnie Neuenberger. A cancer survivor, the race marked his return to racing following his treatment for Follicular Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

According to information on his Web site, he is "...currently in partial remission and will continue a maintenance program over the next two years."

P4OT.com is a grassroots organization

dedicated to encouraging prayer and support for American military forces around the globe.

"You get this busy world that we're in, and we can forget that we have loved ones, friend and family overseas," said Neuenberger. "Anytime you can do anything in a forum like this to help remind people that we have so many people protecting this country, you just can't lose with that."

I think this is very important. I'm 100 percent behind everything our military does. For me, driving this car is an honor."

Neuenberger credited both his experience with cancer and his personal desire to recognize the sacrifices of military men and women as motivating him to stay focused.

"I can leave here tomorrow as long as I know that I gave 110 percent. I would never quit. I am very fortunate to be able to do this," said Neuenberger.

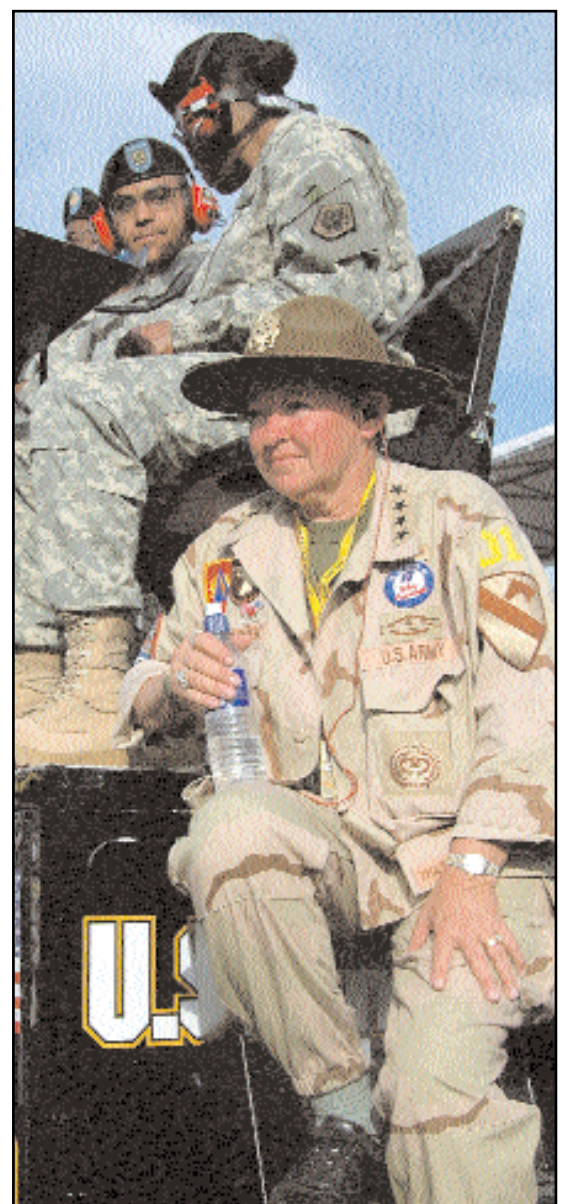
"I believe that you can do anything you want to if you put your mind to it and you're willing to sacrifice enough."

It would be great to end this by telling you that Neuenberger's car finished the day in Victory Lane, but that didn't happen. His Chevy suffered engine problems and had to drop out of the race just a few laps shy of the finish.

You might be tempted to say his team lost the race, but you'd be wrong. During its 100 laps around the track, the car's distinctive logo was seen by thousands of NASCAR fans in the stands. And millions more watched on TV.

A small group of people spent a lot of their own money to encourage folks to pray for Troops like you and me.

And if I know NASCAR fans, they did.



Joe Nemechek's number one fan (and mom), Martha Nemechek, watches her son as races in Sunday's Daytona 500.



Joe Nemechek salutes the Daytona 500's sell out crowd during his parade lap around the track Sunday.

Army dominates first night of the 2005 Armed Forces Boxing Championships



U. S. Army fighter Christopher Downs lands a thunderous right cross on Marine Jonathan Harvison during the opening bouts of Armed Forces Boxing.

Spc. Marcus Butler

Tanya Linton
Army News Service

FT. HUACHUCA, Ariz. — The enthusiastic roar of fans supporting all four services kicked off the first night of the 2005 Armed Forces Boxing Championships in a packed Barnes Field House Feb. 18.

The seven preliminary bouts tonight featured boxers of all four services, but it was the four fights featuring Army boxers that sent the crowd, into a frenzy.

All four stopped their opponents.

Army 1st Lt. Boyd Melson, 2004 CISM gold medalist, was the first Army boxer to step into the ring.

Flying out of the red corner, his ferocious punches made short work of Senior Airman Ramon Castro 1:18 in round one.

In the second of two bouts

at 165 lbs., Army Spc. Quentin McCoy stopped Air Force 1st Lt. Aaron Banks 1:57 in round one.

Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs, who recently returned from a deployment in Iraq, pulled the plug 1:53 in round one on Marine Corps Cpl. Jonathan Harvison's attempt to advance in the 178 lbs. weight class.

Army Sgt. Joe Guzman was equally successful in stopping Air Force Staff Sgt. Melvin Allick in the final fight of the night.

Allick was retired 0:30 in round 2.

Another 2004 CISM medal winner, Marine Cpl. Eric Canales, who took bronze, was in fine form as he outpointed Airman 1st Class Hector Ramos, 16-14.

The 2005 Armed Force Boxing Championships conclude Saturday, Feb. 19 at the Field House.

Results of the first night's fights:

132 lbs.

Senior Airman Richard Mora of Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., outpointed Lance Cpl. Hugo Ramirez of Okinawa, Japan, 31-20.

141 lbs.

Marine Cpl. Eric Canales of Cherry Point, N.C., outpointed Airman 1st Class Hector Ramos, 16-14.

152 lbs.

Army 1st Lt. Boyd Melson of Fort Carson, Colo., stopped Senior Airman Ramon Castro of Hurlburt Field, Fla., 1:18 in round four.

165 lbs.

Marine Cpl. Wilfrido Gonzalez of Camp Lejeune, N.C. outpointed Petty Officer 2nd Class Mylin Wyche of Fighter Squadron Composite 13, 26-15. Army Spc. Quentin McCoy of Fort Carson, Colo., stopped Air Force 1st Lt. Aaron Banks of Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., 1:57 in round one.

178 lbs.

Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, stopped Marine Cpl. Jonathan Harvison, 1:53 in round one.

201 lbs.

Army Sgt. Joe Guzman of Fort Carson, Colo., retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Melvin Allick of Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, 0:30 in round two.